

**Author:** Tom Beaver  
**Category:** Beaver Memos  
**Date:** May 7, 2015

**Tom Beaver's and Larry Massie's Trip  
to Camp Chesterfield, October 17, 2011  
(May 7, 2015)**

Camp Chesterfield is a Spiritualist camp approximately 30 miles north of Indianapolis (and approximately 75 miles south of Decatur, Indiana where John was born) that John Fetzner visited many times from at least 1934 through the completion of his genealogy books in 1971, and even beyond until at least 1974.

There are several prominent references to Camp Chesterfield in the Fetzner archives: In an interview John gave in 1982, he said "A medium that I had known that was one of those that I had confidence in the efficacy of what she had to say ... she told me eight years before Lynn (Carolyn Daily) was born that Lynn would appear at the time that she actually did appear. This was in Camp Chesterfield, Indiana in 1934."

In John's 1964 *One Man's Family* genealogy book, one of the acknowledgements is to the mediums who "precipitated" a "Spirit photo" that was used in the book: "Mrs. Charles Johnson of Bradenton, FL and Mr. Charles Swann of Anderson [the city nearest Camp Chesterfield] Indiana, for lending their good offices in securing the drawing and picture of Johanna Bunz Fetzner (1779-1847)." Charles "Charlie" Swann and "Ellie" Johnson were both Camp Chesterfield mediums noted in the camp's historical records. The Spirit photos mentioned here and in the next paragraph were found by me in the Fetzner archives, and were matched by me with several of the sketches in his books which he mentions.

In John's early 1980s interviews he talked about a Camp Chesterfield medium "precipitating" several "Spirit photos" as well for his 1971 genealogy book, on his mother's family, *The Men from Wengen*. John said, "I obtained four pictures this way ... these pictures would be from the 16th century, long before photography. These were all obtained through mediumship."

In another early 1980s interview John talked about a 1964 séance he attended at Camp Chesterfield: "Sitting Bull materialized right before me and said, 'John, why you trade Jim Bunning? Don't you know that be bad deal?' This was shortly after it happened—and it was a bad deal." Not surprisingly, a Spirit photo from Camp Chesterfield that I found in the archives was of an American Indian chief (in fact, several were).

In other early 1980s interviews, John added that at one Camp Chesterfield séance he attended, Abraham Lincoln appeared and gave a "philosophical speech." And that "Babe Ruth did show up one time." "It was very exciting of course," he said, "But I was never afraid."

There are over 100 "Spirit photos" in John Fetzner's archives from John's many August visits to Camp Chesterfield (which is the height of the summer season there) in 1964, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1972, 1973 and 1974. Charlie Swann's name is on the back of one of them. One of the Spirit photos is of John himself (unless it was meant to be John's long-deceased father). In the archives

I also found colorful hand-written notes to John in colored pencil, including artistic sketches, given to John by the medium-or-mediums involved. One was from his mother in August of 1962 (four years after her death), 1963, and 1974, and one from his father in 1974 as well. There is a note from Johanna Bunz Fetzer in August 1964. And one from a deceased girl named Red Robin, which included a Spirit photo that John had made into a painting which hung above Carolyn Dailey's desk for many years at WKZO Broadcast House.

Carolyn Dailey also told us in an interview that a woman medium came to Broadcast House once in the 1970s and did a private séance for John. Was it Ellie Johnson? We don't know, but I suspect so—John was very careful to only have “legitimate” mediums and psychics channel for him, and John was convinced (so he told me) that he had learned to be able to tell who was legitimate and who wasn't.

Thus, Spiritualism and the Camp Chesterfield mediums were a significant part of John's spiritual journey, at least from the 1930s through the mid 1970s. And so, local historian Larry Massie and myself, Tom Beaver, decided to pay a visit to Camp Chesterfield. On October 17th, 2011, we traveled there, where we were graciously shown by the head resident medium, Reverend Lynda Richey, the still-standing homes of mediums “Lillie Johnson” (deceased) and “Charlie Swann” (deceased, but whose widow was still alive and who still owned their house, although she lives in Florida now).

The “camp” is very quaint and beautiful. The summer is still their busy time so we were the only visitors that sunny fall day. The camp was founded in 1886 by mediums who came there from a Vicksburg, Michigan Spiritualist camp called Frazier's Grove.

The Chesterfield camp sits on 35 acres, in a horseshoe of little medium-owned cottages, each with a “shingle” hanging in front advertising the “services offered” by the medium inside – trance, clairvoyance, direct voice, trumpet, etc. Inside the semi-circle of cottages is a beautiful park, which contains:

- A large chapel, a meeting house/auditorium, a quaint old hotel on the National Register of Historic Places, a book store, an art gallery of noted Camp Chesterfield “Spirit paintings.”
- A medicine wheel, a labyrinth, and a permanent setup of pairs of chairs facing each other for one-on-one processes outdoors.
- A “Trail of Religions” (completed in 1943) that looks very much like John's 1980s' era Hall of Records at the Fetzer Institute. It's a semicircle of busts of famous religious and spiritual leaders in world history.

While we were at Camp Chesterfield we also had a camp medium perform a group séance for us (in attendance were Larry, Tom, Tom's brother Jim, and Jim's wife Susan). The medium was not in trance, nor was the room dark; instead he stood before each of us in turn (we were seated in a circle), eyes open, and addressed each of us, one at a time, for 10-15 minutes each. The medium had not been prompted whatsoever about who we were, etc., nor had anyone else at Chesterfield. Each of us heard from deceased moms, dads, grandparents and the like, mainly giving mundane parental advice, encouragement, etc.

However, when it was my turn I heard this: “You have an old friend who's come forward. He doesn't give his name. He wants you to know he's here with—and, wow, this isn't what I normally say—he

wants you to know that he's here with Great White Brotherhood Masters Comte de St. Germain, Paul the Venetian, Quan Yin, and Jesus, and other higher masters all the way up to where I don't even know." Three days before this I'd sent out a memo to the Trust on the Monday Night Group, which included the sentence, "[Jim Gordon] channeled Great White Brotherhood Masters Comte de St. Germain and Paul the Venetian, Quan Yin, and ... a higher "Master of Inner Light." So I took this to be a signal that the "friend" was, possibly, John (Note: my own deceased father's name had been John as well, which could possibly explain the designation given of "an old friend" instead of "John").

And Larry, when it was his turn, was told that, "The Archangel Michael is standing there behind you" (Michael, of course, is supposedly is the inspiration behind the Fetzer Institute).

For what it's worth, neither my brother Jim nor his wife Susan got anything too unusual, mostly just the usual family ancestors, etc., though Susan also had an Aztec and a Mayan guide come forward; and "coincidentally," Jim and Susan have for several years owned a condo in the Yucatan, which had been purchased at Susan's insistence. Susan was also asked if she had a young daughter who had died as a little girl; Susan said no, and the medium said, "Oh, it is your sister's child—her time was up and she up and died 'just like that.'" This turned out to be true—Susan's sister had a daughter who died at the age of 9—she caught the flu and died in two days. And to my brother the medium said, "Your father's sister Martha is here" and it happens that our dad's only sister was named Martha. So ... coincidences? Or did we have a pretty talented psychic as our medium?

Afterward, as we were leaving his cottage, the medium came up and tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Wow, I'm still spinning from those masters your friend brought to see you. We don't see that sort of thing here as a rule."

After the séance we walked over and looked at the house owned by "Charlie Swann's" widow. A book on the history of the camp that we purchased in the camp bookstore included photographs of Swann, and also Lillie Dee (Mrs. Charles) Johnson, who, as said, were given the acknowledgements in John's first genealogy book, *One Man's Family*.

John Fetzer had told me more than once that whenever he'd hit a "dead end" on either of his genealogy books, he'd go to one of the mediums he trusted at a place called Camp Chesterfield, and that his family members would come forward and tell him where the next graveyard on the "family trail" was. He would go there—and sure enough, John would say, they'd be correct. And it is deeply fascinating to me that John saved "messages" from his mother and father from at least as late as 1974, when he was 73 years of age. There has been speculation (from John's long-time friend, Judy Skutch-Whitson) that John began going to Camp Chesterfield in the 1920s or early 1930s to contact a "deceased childhood love-of-his-life" who had died in the 1918 flu epidemic—Red Robin, perhaps? But it is at least as likely, or perhaps more so, that he was motivated as much or more by his desire to contact the father whom he never knew, who had died when he was just two years old.

Whatever the motivation, John Fetzer's life-long spiritual journey took an important swing through Spiritualist Camp Chesterfield. As I mentioned, John told me more than once that he took pride in his self-professed ability to tell a legitimate psychic from a phony one, and he certainly had found mediums that he trusted for decades at Camp Chesterfield.